



A STUDY OF GENDER AND AGE WISE DIFFERENCES IN ALIENATION AMONG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research paper is to explore the alienation level among adults pursuing higher education and to find out gender differences, if any, in feeling of alienation. The sample consists of 52 participants pursuing higher education with age ranging from 23 to 32 years. Alienation scale by Hardeo Ohja (2010) was administered on all participants. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Analysis of the data revealed that though at moderate level, but there exists a feeling of alienation among adults. No Gender wise and age wise differences were found to exist among adults.

KEYWORDS: adults, alienation, gender differences, age wise differences.

Introduction

The concept of alienation is not new, but it reached peak in popular usage during 1960s. (Schacht, 1971; Conger, 1977). Alienation owes its roots in Roman law, where alienatio word is used to denote the act of transferring property. This term is used in various fields like in philosophy as separation of individual from God, from other people and from one's self; in law as transfer of property from one person to other; in psychiatry as deviation from normality; in psychology and sociology as individual's feeling of alieness towards society, nature, other people or herself. The core meaning of alienation can be taken as separation, segregation, detachment, disconnection from oneself, social group around oneself and nature (God) at large. It is a feeling in which individual considers himself/ herself as totally detached from the world they are living in.

Lang (1964) defines alienation as an estrangement or separation between parts and the whole of the personality and the significant aspects of the world of experience. Mau (1992) defines- Alienation as a sense of social estrangement, an absence of social support or meaningful social connection. To be alienated is to lack a sense of belongingness, to feel cut off from family, friends or school Bronfenbrenner (1986). Schacht gave three basic contemporary meaning of alienation (1) as separation of two or more entities; (2) as transfer of property or rights to other and (3) as objectivity which is aroused by the basic awareness of others. Powerlessness, normlessness, cultural estrangement, self-estrangement, social isolation and meaninglessness are the elements of alienation suggested by Seeman (1960).

Anomie and anomia are used as synonym of alienation. Anomie is alienation from society whereas anomia is self-alienation. Anomia is personal disorganization whereas alienation is a psychological state of an individual (Nettler, 1957).

Need and significance of study

To be in touch with near and dear ones is a desire of each individual for satisfying his/her sociological needs. This need of connectivity gives origin to fastest way of communication, which now takes the shape of virtual communities (Social media). This media is used by massive population to maintain their ties by sharing their sorrows, happiness, daily life experiences etc. But recent trends in researches showed that in spite of this fastest connectivity media, individual is feeling isolated, lonely and separated from this world. Hence the researcher attempts to know about the feeling of alienation and gender and age wise differences (if any) among adults.

Objectives of the study

1. To study alienation level among adults.
2. To study gender differences in alienation among adults.
3. To study age wise differences in alienation among adults.

Hypothesis of the study

1. There will be no significant gender differences in alienation among adults.
2. There will be no significant age wise differences in alienation among adults.

Delimitation of the study

1. This study was delimited to students pursuing Master's and Doctorate degree in field of education.
2. This study was delimited to adults with age ranging from 23-32 years.

3. This study was delimited to Punjabi University, Patiala.

Research Method

Descriptive survey method was used to achieve objectives of the research paper.

Sample

A convenience sample of 52 participants was selected for this study. Students pursuing Master's and Doctorate in Education of Punjabi University, Patiala were taken as a sample for the study. Selected participants falls under 23-32 years of age range.

Research Tools

Alienation scale by Hardeo Ohja (2010) was used for collecting data. This scale aims to measure level of alienation among three age groups i.e. young (21-40 years), middle aged (over 40-60 years) and old (over 60 years). This scale is a five point rating scale consisted of 20 items. This instrument has test-retest reliability with value of 0.77.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Obtained data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation. To explore gender and age wise differences, t test was used.

1. Alienation level among adults

Analysis of the data revealed that 28.69% of adults have below average alienation level as compared to 28.77% of adults who have above average alienation level. The remaining 42.54% of adults have average level of alienation. Thus, it can be said that adults are suffering from feeling of alienation though at moderate level.

2. Gender differences in feeling of alienation among adults

T test was used to explore (if any) gender differences in alienation level among adults.

Table 1
Gender wise differences in alienation level among adults

Gender	Mean	N	SD	T
females	54.03	26	11.82	0.352
males	55.04	26	8.62	

*not significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 1 depicts that mean scores of alienation for male students is 55.04 with S.D. 8.62 whereas the mean scores of alienation for female students is 54.03 with S.D. 11.82. There is difference in alienation scores of females and males; but significance of difference is tested by using t test. The calculated t value is 0.352 which is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. It shows that there exists no significant difference between male and female adults in alienation level. It can be said both males and females possess similar alienation level. Hence, hypothesis that, “There will be no significant gender differences in alienation among adults” was retained.

3. Age wise differences among adults

To calculate age wise differences, two groups i.e. group A with age (less than and equal to 27 years) and group B (greater than 27 years) were formed on the basis of median cut point. Then, T test was used to explore (if any) age wise differences in alienation level among adults.

Table 2
Age wise comparison in alienation level among adults

Group	Mean	N	SD	T
GroupA	54.38	29	9.14	0.353
GroupB	53.35	23	11.32	

*not significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Table 2 depicts that mean scores of alienation for group A is 54.38 with S.D 9.14 whereas the mean scores of alienation for group B is 54.03 with S.D. 11.32. There is difference in alienation scores for group A and Group B; t test was used to test significance of difference among two groups. The calculated t value is 0.353 which is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. It shows that there exists no significant age wise difference in alienation among adults. Hence, the hypothesis that, "There will be no significant age wise differences in alienation among adults" was retained.

Findings of the study

1. Adults possess moderate level of alienation among them.
2. There exist no significant gender wise differences in alienation among adults.
3. There exist no significant age wise differences in alienation among adults.

Discussion of the Results

The first finding of the study is that moderate level of alienation exists among adults. The second finding of the study reveals that there exist no gender wise differences in the feeling of alienation among adults. Both males and females stand on same level of alienation. This study is in consonance with study conducted by Apriyanti (2016). This study is in contrast with study by Datta and Bhardwaj (2015) and Malik (2015). The third finding indicates that there exists no significant difference in alienation among adults in relation to age.

Discussion of the results highlights that feeling of alienation among adults can be because of lack of social support system, lack of control of individual on his/her life decisions, feeling of uncertainty about future, non fulfillment of one's true aspirations, unhealthy home and work place conditions, more dependency on virtual world for real life communication. Lack of control of individual on his decisions develops in him a feeling of helplessness in controlling their life and shaping their future. Over dependency of virtual world (social sites) can lower the feeling of connectedness, hence a space for alienation.

Strategies to cope with alienation

The feeling of separateness is found among adults, though at moderate level. To help an individual to deal with alienation and to prevent him/her to reach higher level of alienation, some strategies have to be followed:

- Parents should show respect to their child's decisions and lend them full support. This social warmth and attention can help individual to overcome feeling of estrangement.
- Individual should involve himself/herself in activities which he or she enjoys to combat the feeling of isolation and detachment.
- More dependency on virtual world for communication should be avoided. Rather, face to face communication should be widely used to rejoice the feeling of social connectedness, thus retarding social disconnectedness/ isolation.
- Meditation and counseling programs can help to heal alienation.

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